

compunction or a doubt
 about this argument. No
 wonder it
 has been asserted that all
 truth, except that which is
 mathemat-
 ically demonstrable, is only
 a function of the age. When
 the
 earth is underpopulated and
 there is an economic demand
 for
 men, democracy is inevitable.
 That state of things cannot be
 permanent. Therefore
 democracy cannot last. It
 contains no
 absolute and "eternal" truth.
 While it lasts a certain set of
 political notions and devices
 are in fashion. Certain moral
 standards go with them.
 Evolution is now accepted as
 a final
 fact in regard to organic
 phenomena. A philosophy of
 nature is
 derived from it. Is it only a
 fashion, — a phase of
 thought ?
 For to all but a very few such
 a philosophy has no
 guarantee
 except that it is current. All
 accept it because all accept
 it,
 and for no other reason.
 Narrower philosophies
 become the
 fashion in classes, coteries,
 and cliques. They are really
 affec-
 tations of something which
 wins prestige and comes to
 be a
 badge of culture or other
 superiority. A few are
 distinguished
 because they know Greek, or
 because they are "
 freethinkers,"
 or because they are ritualists,
 or because they profess a
 certain

cultus in art, or because they are disciples of Ruskin, Eastlake, Carlyle, Emerson, Browning, Tolstoi, or Nietsche, and cultivate the ideas and practices which these men have advocated as true and wise. Often such fashions of thought or art pass from a narrow coterie to a wider class, and sometimes they permeate the mores and influence an age. When men believed in witches they did so because everybody did. When the belief in witches was given up it was because a few men set the fashion, and it was no longer "enlightened" to believe in them.

195. Fashion not trivial; not subject to argument. Fashion is by no means trivial. It is a form of the dominance of the group over the individual, and it is quite as often harmful as beneficial. There is no arguing with the fashion. In the case of dress we can sometimes tell what princess or actress started the fashion, and we sometimes know, in the case of ideas, who set them afloat. Generally, however, it is not known who started a fashion in dress. The authority of fashion is imperative as to everything which it touches. The sanctions are 'ridicule and